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Laws to Protect Criminals.

Crime begets crime. The South is paying the penalty of the race disturbance at Pittsburg. Negroes who do not read hear things and the reports of the crimes perpetrated by the negroes in the city of smoke and chorus girl millinery, and the drastic methods resorted by the whites in efforts to put a stop to them, have inflamed the criminal negroes of the South. This or some other cause has resulted in a renewed outbreak of crimes against women and increased activity in Judge Lynch's court.

There seems to be also an outbreak of other crimes of which women are not the victims. Day before yesterday we published a story from Texas of an attack by negroes on an officer who was attempting to arrest two negroes for a crime perpetrated on another negro. Though this officer was defending the rights of one of their own race, he was attacked by negroes. We also published an account of the murder of a preacher in Mississippi by a negro. Yesterday we published the account of the murderer's lynching.

For this lynching in Mississippi the judge of the circuit court is largely responsible. He knew that the prisoner would have been lynched Tuesday, but for the fact that the threatening crowd was assured that a special term of the court would be called and the confessed murderer would have a speedy trial. If he did not know this, others did, hundreds of miles away from the scene. He refused to call a special term of the court and he should have understood that this was simply tying the rope around the prisoner's neck.

Of course, we do not agree with the

leaders of the mob, who said as the negro would not get a speedy trial they could not be blamed for taking justice into their own hands. Men deserve blame for murder whether the man they kill deserves death or not. But as much to blame as judge or mob are the men have an opportunity of repealing our idiotic system of criminal law and do not repeal it. It was designed to meet conditions that passed away centuries ago and yet it is clung to as the sacred palladium of our liberties. It is now nothing but a shield for crime. It places every conceivable obstacle in the way of the punishment of crime and if punishment ever comes at all—and generally it does not—it comes after months or years of waiting.

It is not the fault of the lawyers who are employed to defend criminals. It is not the fault of the judges who charge the law as it is. It is not the fault of the jurors who are told that they must acquit if there is a reasonable doubt of guilt. The fault lies in the fact that judges and jurors and prosecutors are tied fast by an idiotic system which leaves no one free but the accused.

The people, therefore, lose confidence in the methods prescribed by law and as reasonable men they cannot help losing confidence in them. There is not a judge on the bench in Florida or in any other state who will say that one guilty man in ten is punished for his crime or one in ten among those who are tried for capital offenses, and who are guilty, is adequately punished by law. The judges can't help themselves, the jurors, under their oaths to observe the law, can't help themselves. Who can blame the people for losing all con-

fidence in the English law or the American law preserving its fundamentals as a means of preventing crime?

Do we favor lynch law? No one who has read the columns of this paper can bring the charge. No paper has more bitterly denounced lynching and we still adhere to the opinions we have time and again expressed. No people have a right to do a thing illegally that they can do legally. No people have a right to violate a law that they can repeal. If we insist on making our laws a protection for the guilty instead of a protection for the innocent, we must not complain when the guilty escape and we must not resort to illegal methods to prevent them from escaping.

But let's tell the truth, the Times-Union and the men who read it. What court makes fewest mistakes? Is there one reader of the Times-Union who will deny that this is Judge Lynch's court? Is there a judge on the bench that will claim that the court over which he presides makes as few mistakes as are made by the mobs that are unhampered except by their ideas of justice?

In a sense the mob makes a mistake every time, if we can use the mild word "mistake" as a descriptive of the crime of murder. We are not using the word in that sense. We mean to say that not in one case in fifty do the courts punish an innocent man, nor do they adequately punish the guilty in one case in ten and oftener than not they inflict no punishment on the guilty at all.

The remedy is not lynch law nor the amendment of our criminal procedure. It is in the complete obliteration of our present system and the adoption of one that seeks to ascertain the truth rather than to let ninety and nine guilty men escape.—Times-Union.

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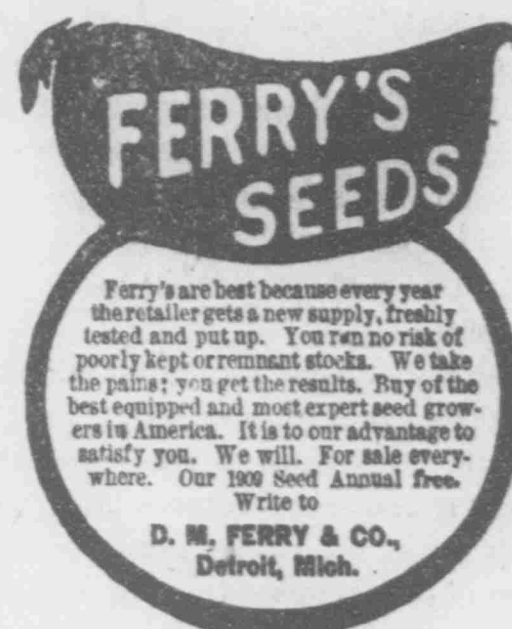
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